

ERNEST KAPUAMAILANI KAI

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ERNEST KAPUAMAILANI KAI

(1905 - )

Ernie Kai, the eldest of six brothers born in Hilo on the Big Island to John and Annie Kai, describes a childhood of contentment, encouragement and strong religious influence. He explains his joint graduation from Hilo High and Punahou, and his attendance at the University of Hawaii prior to his transfer to Yale University where he graduated from the Law School in 1930.

Upon his return to Honolulu, he embarked on a legal career with the firm of Heen, Kelly, Stafford and Godbold. In 1934 he joined the Territory of Hawaii, first in the Treasurer's Office, then in the Attorney General's office, serving briefly as Attorney General at the outset of World War II and, finally, as Secretary of the Territory.

He recalls the tragedy of World War II, the urgency of establishing martial law, some of the results of that action, and the demands placed on his office during those years. In 1945, after the end of the war, Mr. Kai resumed private practice.

Mr. Kai recounts his wife Peggy's strong interest in Hawaiiana, her career that evolved from this interest, and the worldwide travels they enjoyed prior to her death in 1985.

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INTERVIEW WITH ERNEST KAPUAMAILANI KAI

At his Nuuanu home, 222 Dowsett Avenue, Honolulu, Hawaii

October 8, 1986

K: Ernest Kai

S: Alice Sinesky, Interviewer

K: I was born in the little town of Hilo on the island of Hawaii on February 11, 1905. My father at that time was County Clerk for the island of Hawaii, and a rather important political figure in the Republican party. He was, I believe, county chairman of the Republican party and was a member of the House of Representatives in the early twenties.

My mother, of course, at that time was not teaching. She was educated here in Honolulu, I believe, at the Mid-Pacific Institute and was trained for teaching. She did not start teaching until, I believe, after the last of my brothers was born. I had five brothers following me, two years apart. I was born in 1905; Herbert was born in 1907; Johnny in 1909 and then Paul in 1911; George in 1913 and the last one, Albert, in 1915.

I had one sister who was born later, but she died. In those days we did not have good medical facilities at hand and she died at home of, I think they called it, colic. She choked and we didn't know how to relieve her choking so she just passed away.

S: How old was she?

K: She was about a year old at the time. My brother Paul and his wife were swept out to sea and drowned in the tsunami tidal wave that swept through Hilo in 1946.

Anyway, I had a very pleasant childhood. My mother, as I said, was educated for that time. It was, I wouldn't say unusual, but perhaps unusual among the part-Hawaiians. She wanted me to be an educated person, too. All of her children. She had a lot of reading material in our library and, of course, I read very avidly everything that was in the house. I think I gained thereby, because throughout my schooling I was a good student.

I remember in my younger days my grandmother lived occasionally with us. My grandmother lived on what we

called Front Street, which was on the shores of Hilo. Front Street which is now Kamehameha Avenue. She would visit us quite frequently, and she spoke Hawaiian very fluently although she was part-Chinese and mostly Hawaiian. We were brought up as Hawaiians, because the Chinese grandfathers who married my grandmothers (both grandmothers on my father's side and on my mother's side) came here and then went back to China to die, as usual.

Anyway, my grandmother was a very strong Christian. I believe she was one of the founders of the Haili Church also, and one of the founders of the Kaahumanu Society in Hilo and a trustee of the Haili Church. I say that because we lived next to the Haili Church and I went to church three or four times every Sunday including children's prechurch schooling.

S: Like Sunday school?

K: Correct. Then I would go to the main morning service and would help pump the organ. In those days they had the hand pump on the organ and that was my job. At night we would have Christian endeavor and also night services. I would attend all of them because we lived right next door to the church and my mother and grandmother were good and faithful Christians.

At that time the Reverend S. L. Desha, who came from Kentucky, was our minister. He married a Hawaiian woman and was a very fluent speaker of the Hawaiian language. He conducted his sermons in the Haili Church both in Hawaiian and English.

S: Did your entire family go as a group?

K: Yes, oh yes. I learned then to speak Hawaiian. Of course, today I'm lost in it because I have no one to speak to, but I'm trying to bring it back by attending a class at the Queen Emma Home here. A Mrs. Alice Ledward conducts classes for beginners, intermediates and advanced Hawaiian once a week throughout the year. Right now most of the students in my class are on vacation so we're postponing classes until January, but I go there for fun and to refresh my Hawaiian.

My mother sent me to kindergarten and I got through kindergarten so quickly that she decided to put me in the first grade, even though I was not quite six years old, which was the starting age. I enjoyed my days at what was called the Union School in those days. The school at that time had wonderful teachers. The Deyo D-E-Y-O sisters, Mrs. Beers and a Miss Bohnberg was the principal. They were wonderful women who were dedicated to education and helped us kids along in our schooling. They even helped us after school.

S: Were these haole ladies?

K: Yes, we had haole teachers principally in those days, so we learned to speak good English. My mother, of course, spoke English very well, having been educated here in Honolulu. She taught second grade at Union School. I still find people in Honolulu who had been taught by her. They're old-timers who say, "Yes, I remember your mother. She taught me in second grade."

I did very well through the first eight grades. I had good marks. Mother thought that I'd better continue on to high school, so I went to Hilo High and finished it in three years. I earned enough points in three years with a good A average.

S: You enjoyed school, didn't you?

K: I just loved it. Of course, my mother had an excellent library, which helped me a lot. I read a lot. I was constantly reading at night. In those days, you must remember, we did not have electric lights; we did not have telephones until later. And we had outhouses until plumbing came along. We had wood stoves, kerosene stoves, the gas stove and, finally, the electric stove.

It was my job to clean the wood stove. Polish it up and get the wood for it. The kindling for it. Mother taught me to cook and that's how I got my beginning. Today I cook quite a bit. My mother taught me to cook the basic things like good old Hawaiian stew and hamburger, hot dogs, roast beef and roast chicken, et cetera. Things were very cheap in those days.

Also, we made our own poi. We had an acre and a half of beautiful land right in the center of Hilo. We had our own vegetable garden, our own chickens, our own pigs. My father had horses and raced them from time to time in sulky races. He was a great sportsman. I remember every Sunday we had those little hacks--surries? four-seaters--and every Sunday he'd put on his white linen duster and his cap and after lunch we'd go out for rides around town. I loved the smell of the horses as we'd go along with my dad whipping them and trotting all over Hilo looking at all the sights, and coming back and everybody taking a nap before supper. It was quite a wonderful childhood that I had. Very pleasant.

S: I get the feeling that your family situation was well above the average.

K: I suppose so. My father, as I said, was County Clerk for Hawaii and the chairman of the Republican party for that county. Later on he went into the tourist business. He had touring automobiles, like the Gray Lines, and had chauffeurs

to take tourists to the Volcano House or Kona or around the island. He did very well.

S: He was a good businessman.

K: A good businessman although he only went to the fourth grade. He was a bright man and I had a wonderful childhood.

One of the things that my mother wanted me to do was play the piano. So I studied the piano for six years under a Mrs. Hattie Lewis who was a strict teacher, but a very wonderful teacher. Of course, we would have recitals from time to time. Since then I've given it up, because when I went to Yale, there were no more piano lessons. Also, I studied the violin for a brief period. My mother wanted me to learn the violin, so I studied that for a while.

And dancing. I went to a dancing school in Hilo with the children of the plantation managers and businessmen and my schoolmates. We learned to dance.

S: What type of dancing?

K: It was not the fox trot or ballroom dancing. It was fancy dancing like the Brazilian maxixe--almost like the dancing that was done in medieval France.

S: More of a classical.

K: It was not like square dancing, but it's where you don't dance around with your partner, but you ...

S: Like a minuet? (K nods affirmatively) Isn't that interesting? I never would have thought of that type of dancing in Hilo, which goes to show how wrong our impressions can be.

K: Hilo at that time was a tiny little town, rather isolated because the Inter-Island steamer would only come once or twice a week, but nevertheless, it was a beautiful community with wonderful people. There were people there who were sugar plantation managers, owners of stores, bank managers and many well-to-do Hawaiians, Chinese and Japanese.

S: Do you have any idea of how your father and mother met?

K: No, strangely enough, I don't how they met. All I know is that they got married and it was a beautiful wedding, because my grandmother was a very prominent woman in the community there and my grandmother's sister, my grandaunt, was Mrs. [Aima] Joseph Nawahi, who was lady-in-waiting to Queen Liliuokalani. Her husband, my granduncle, was Minister

of Foreign Affairs under the Queen and they were very close friends of hers.

I remember very well when the Queen used to come to Hilo. By the way, my grandaunt was well-to-do and had a beautiful, huge home. When the Queen used to come to Hilo, she would stay with my grandaunt. The lady-in-waiting on each island would be where the Queen goes to.

On several occasions, I was fortunate to meet the Queen. It was a wonderful experience for me to see her and to meet her. The Hawaiians in the neighborhood and along the coast would come bringing what they called their hookupu, their presents to the Queen. They would bring taro, sweet potatoes, pigs, chickens, et cetera.

There would be luaus and eating would be going on all hours of the day. People coming in. Singing and dancing. Hula dancing. The Queen would at times sing and play her ukulele. She was a gracious woman, but on her last visit she was not well. She would come to Hilo to rest at my grandaunt's.

I remember our home on Hilo was a huge home for a family like ours. In those days, as I said, we didn't have all the modern facilities we have today. We had an outhouse, no telephone, no electricity. Later when electricity came in, I would read all night because I was so interested in learning what was going on in the world--particularly stories like The Count of Monte Cristo, The Three Musketeers and the Rover Boys and so forth.

To make a long story short, I finished Hilo High School in three years, but I was too young. There was no way that I could get to college from Hilo High. It was not accredited for college. The Hawaiian Islands then, I suppose, were still called the Sandwich Islands.

I well remember when I was appointed to a judgeship just before World War II. My commission went to Honolulu, Hawaii, the Philippine Islands. That's where they thought Hawaii was. They couldn't find my commission for months, so I never got to be a judge because World War II came along.

Anyway, coming back to those early days, they decided I should go to Punahou. That's how I came to Punahou. But before I came here there was another incident in my life that I think helped me a lot and that was that I was a Boy Scout. Things to do after school. What to do with your time. The Boy Scout movement started then and I joined the first troop in Hilo. It was the Wilders from Honolulu--I think it was Sam Wilder--who started the movement in Honolulu and thought it would be a good idea if they started one over on the Big Island. A group of us joined Troop 1 of Hilo and

that's where I made lifelong friends, although I did have friends throughout high school who have been wonderful friends to me.

For example, Ralph Johnston, who was head of Hawaiian Electric years ago and has since passed away, became a close friend. Paul Johnston, his brother, is still alive and we're close friends. The Johnstons' father, by the way, was a chemist at the sugar plantation. Tom Balding. His father was--I forget what capacity--but we're close friends. Another was George Vicars who used to be with Bishop Trust. I think he's living on the mainland now. His father was head of a retail store.

Then there's Art Schoen who lived next door, still alive at eighty-two years, still playing golf and also a close friend. We all live here in Honolulu, where I have made my home since 1931 when I started working in a law firm here.

As I say, the Boy Scout movement plus my piano lessons plus my dancing school plus my reading and my background and education gave me the opportunity to meet these fine boys and many others who have been friends throughout my lifetime.

When I went to Yale, the Johnstons were at MIT. They'd come down to visit me at Yale at New Haven and I'd visit them at MIT at Cambridge. Punahou friends who were at Harvard, Cornell and Princeton also gathered together in the East during football season.

S: In those days, in the 1920s, it seems everybody went to the East Coast more than the West Coast schools.

K: Exactly, because the West Coast hadn't really developed like it has today. UC and Stanford are outstanding. I was planning on going to Stanford, but my uncle here and some of the Yale men persuaded me to go to Yale.

S: Well, let's get you back to Punahou. (laughs)

K: So to Punahou I came. Before I came to Punahou, my mother and my grandmother would bring me on trips to Honolulu because I had relatives here. One of my mother's sisters was married to my uncle who was an attorney. We'd come to visit here. My grandmother, of course, had friends like Lahilahi Webb who was one of the receptionists at the Bishop Museum. That's how I learned to love the Bishop Museum. I'd go to visit her and she'd take me all around the museum to show me these beautiful things. That leads to how I met Peggy years later.

Other relatives--all my tutus were here--the Honolulu branch. I knew a little bit about Honolulu, but Honolulu to me was the big metropolis in those days. It used to frighten



me with the clang, clang of the trolley cars and I'd get lost because I couldn't get oriented as to where I was. Coming down to Punahou was kind of scary. I stayed with my uncle.

S: You had graduated from Hilo High School?

K: No, I left without graduation. I had all my credits for graduation, but they said, "Come back and graduate with your class, but in the meantime go to Punahou." I had a straight A average, so when I went to Punahou I was admitted quickly to the senior class. My experience at Punahou was just wonderful. I made so many friendships there that lasted through the years.

Of course, I was an A student there. I got to know Mary Card Porter very well. She helped me with my English. Helen Hasty, Dr. MacNeil, Arthur Silverman, Dr. Hauck, Chippy Chase. I can't think of all the different teachers I got to know because I was just a boy from Hilo, but I did well.

Then I was ready to go to Yale, but Punahou at that time was not accredited, I guess, in 1922.

S: Was it Oahu College at that time?

K: Yes, it was Oahu College. At any rate, while I was at Punahou I made many friends across the board; fine girls, boys in sports and in ROTC, the rifle team, and at the classes. I went out for sports--football, track, et cetera. I did it because I wanted to be a good sport and do everything come what may. Naturally, I was too small, but I made a lot of good friends that way. The same thing at Yale later on. So I went to the University of Hawaii in the meantime, biding my time until I could get enough money to go away to Yale.

S: Did you actually graduate from Punahou?

K: Yes, let's go back to that. I graduated from Punahou and at the same time I went back to Hilo and graduated with my classmates, so I graduated twice in the same year. (laughter)

S: But you never had to work part-time like a lot of boys did in those days?

K: Not here. My father, at that time, was able to help me. My mother was a school teacher and my father did well in business. I'll come later to the Depression. That's when everything went kaput, you see.

S: Your mother made sure that you had enough things to occupy your time and, since you were in an above-average situation, most mothers prefer to have their children spend

their time reading and this type of thing if they can manage it. You were fortunate.

K: Yes, I was very fortunate and my second brother also was fortunate. He was a good student, but he was unfortunate at that point that he wasn't able to go away to Yale because of finances. He went to the University of Hawaii. I was fortunate that in my second year at the University of Hawaii my grades were unusually good. I was going to enter Stanford, but my uncle who went to Michigan--his name was Noah Aluli--he married my mother's sister--said, "Why don't you go to Yale? That's a fine school. I think I can get you a scholarship."

At that point the expense of travelling across the Pacific and across the United States was horrendous. My parents couldn't afford that. I said that I was willing to work my way, which was fine and which I did.

He got me a scholarship. I met John Galt, who was president of Hawaiian Trust at that time; Herman Von Holt is still alive; Dudley Pratt, who had just graduated from Yale, and they were the Yale Alumni Scholarship Committee. They checked me over and said that they'd give me a \$500-a-year scholarship. Wonderful! But it's only a loan. You have to pay it back. Okay, I'll pay it back.

My mother, in the meantime, had saved money against the day when she knew I would need it. She was determined that I would have a good education. She was a wonderful mother. She really inspired me and urged me to do better. My father, also, but my father was busy making money to support the family because at that point there were six of us boys all to be educated. It was quite a burden.

At any rate, I took off for Yale and my departure for Yale was terrible. It was as if I were going away, never to see the family again. I had never left the Islands. I didn't know what I was going to get into or how I was going to get to New Haven, of all things. One of my schoolmates from Hilo was going to Stanford, so at least I had company that far. Going on the ship, of course, I ran into a lot of local boys who were going to Yale. There was Bobby Carter, whose father was Governor Carter. Sam Damon of the Damon family. There was Montgomery Clark from Punahou who eventually became my roommate at Yale. So we sort of got together. And Roger Williams who became manager of Kukaiau Ranch and who's now retired and living in Kona. Although we didn't go together on the same train, at least we knew that we were going to be there in New Haven.

S: Now you had started at the University of Hawaii?

K: I went there for two years and at that point I was ready to go to New Haven and my grades were good enough to get to New Haven, but because the University was not accredited I lost a year. Although I spent two years at the University of Hawaii and should have been a junior at New Haven, I entered as a sophomore.

This classmate of mine who was my roommate did the same thing, too. We roomed together all through Yale. Montgomery Clark. From a local missionary family. I forget what branch. He divorced his first wife, lost his second wife and is now married a third time and living in a retirement home in Arizona. We correspond occasionally.

I still have my ties with Punahou, although I spent just one year there. I just loved Punahou. The University, of course, has completely changed from a beautiful little agricultural college of 800 or 1,000 people to now about 20,000 or 25,000, so I've sort of lost touch with it. I have no connection except the fact that I went there.

S: Now you had a certain amount of support from these friends, but how did you cope with the mainland? What kind of a revelation was the East Coast?

K: Well, it was strange to me. In the first place, I'd never been exposed to multiracial groups like the Jews and blacks. It was strange to run into them and it was strange, also, to be almost considered a black yourself. It was kind of embarrassing at times because I knew damn well I was Hawaiian. Naturally, people in those days...it was embarrassing at times, but when I got to New Haven, people knew that I came from Honolulu. "Oh yes, the Sandwich Islands. We know that."

I became very popular in New Haven because I spoke good English and I was a top student. I graduated magna cum laude and Phi Beta Kappa in three years. You can see here in some of the clippings. (displays scrapbook) They wouldn't admit me to Phi Beta Kappa because I was only there three years. They said that in order to belong to Phi Beta Kappa you must be here four years. Well, twelve years later they changed the rules and one of the officers of Yale College came all the way out here--I knew him very well--he was the Registrar and Bursar at Yale University--to present me with a Phi Beta Kappa key.

Anyway, I had a great time at New Haven, but at first it was a question of adjustment. People getting to know who I am and what I'm like. I guess I was the first one of Hawaiian ancestry to graduate from Yale. We had some boys of Hawaiian ancestry who went there, but never did finish,

maybe because of the weather or maybe because they didn't have the background. I don't know. I don't know whether there's been any of Hawaiian ancestry since who graduated from Yale magna cum laude and Phi Beta. I don't think so, but that's not very important.

The point is that I enjoyed New Haven. I made a lot of good friends. I still have friends that I visit in the East who invited me to their homes when Peggy and I made trips to Europe and the Near East. Peggy and I travelled throughout the world since 1956. Every year except two years; one year I had a knee operation and another year when Peggy had cancer and died. This year I'm going to Easter Island. Peggy and I had planned to go. I'm going there this year.

S: So many people have said that during their college years they formed wonderful, lasting friendships.

K: Oh, yes. Great friendships that lasted, particularly in my case. I presume that it depends, also, on how successful you are. I've had a very interesting career and I don't say "highly successful," but to me highly satisfactory. Marrying a wonderful wife, having a wonderful career and having a wonderful daughter.

S: And living in a wonderful place.

K: Of course, living here. Maybe the next step after we review this part of my education is what came after. What comes after is also interesting, although I consider my childhood and education in my early years rather unusual because of my mother urging me. "You must be educated. You must go away to school. And always be a good Christian, too." And I have been a good Christian.

S: Those values have to start at an early age.

K: Right. My grandmother, of course, being a trustee of the Haili Church in Hilo. That's probably the oldest church on the island. I don't know. It used to be a grass hut. Now it's a beautiful church. Whenever I get to Hilo I try to get to some of the services, although the ministers and so forth have changed considerably from my time. I love the smell of the pews in the church and the bell that I used to ring and the organ that I used to pump. I forgot to tell you that I sang in the choir. Later on as I got adept at the piano I occasionally played the organ. Not regularly.

S: Was the whole family musical? What about the other boys?

K: No. My brother John was very musical. He played the piano. He and I were the only ones. The others were not

musical at all. They sing, but they can't play an instrument.

Talking about the piano. Later on in our lives, Peggy and I helped build the church at Malaekahana, the Church of the Holy Cross. Peggy used to play the organ there and when she couldn't play, I'd play. That was another wonderful experience that came from our background.

S: While you were at Yale for three years, did you come home at all?

K: Just one summer. Three of us had bought a car for \$150 and we drove across the continent sleeping out in the fields --never in a hotel because we couldn't afford it. We'd sleep in the car or in a haystack. We drove across the continent in four and a half days and left the car in San Francisco at the home of one of the boys. We worked as able-bodied seamen on the President McKinley of the Dollar Lines that came back and forth from San Francisco to Honolulu. We signed up with the union. We worked as seamen--Montgomery Clark and myself. We spent the summer here and had a great time. Then we got our jobs back to get back to San Francisco. We worked our way back and picked up our car in San Francisco and tootled on back to New Haven in four and a half days.

I've been across the continent two times then and twice more when Peggy and I were married. I went back to my twenty-fifth reunion. I picked up a car, a Studebaker, in Lansing, Michigan, and drove up to New Haven and drove back. We had a great time coming back. Ann was with us and we just tootled all around the United States. We went to Jasper National Park, Lake Louise, to Yellowstone Park, Glacier National Park, Yosemite and so on. It was a great, great summer.

S: You had mentioned that when you got to college you did have to work. What kinds of jobs did you have?

K: I waited on tables. I got my meals that way. I stoked furnaces during winter and shoveled snow to clear pathways to homes.

S: Whatever you could find you did.

K: I did anything to make a dollar and I had to. All my mother could send me was \$25 a month, which came regularly until the Depression when my father lost almost everything. Then I had nothing. I got my \$500 from Yale scholarship fund.

S: Do you remember what the tuition was in those days?

K: I don't remember except that it was paid by the \$500 loan and whatever was left over paid the laboratory fees and so on. It didn't cost me anything. That \$500 took care of the basic costs. All that I had to pay for was my room and board, and that I did by waiting on tables and doing odd jobs plus the \$25 a month plus what I had saved. I made money working summers, too, you know.

When I came home that one summer, I worked with my father's company as a tour driver. I picked up a salary for two months plus tips, so I had that. It all helped. I made ends meet so that I managed to get through, but it was not easy because I had to study in the meantime. When my father lost his money, then I was in the law school and I thought, "Oh my, I've got to quit law school," but I found a job, which took up a lot of my time, but I managed.

END OF TAPE 1/SIDE 1

December 16, 1986

S: Would you please tell me the story about the ring that your father gave you. You had mentioned to me after we finished our first interview that you were to use it only in an emergency.

K: Oh, yes. Just before I left for Yale my father told me, "You know, it takes mail two or three weeks to get to you and to get back so if you're short of money, it will be a problem getting funds to you. To see you through temporarily, I'm giving you this diamond ring. It's worth about \$1,000. If you get into trouble where you need money, pawn it. You should get at least three, four or five hundred dollars loan on it, which should carry you over until you write to me and I can forward you funds."

I took the ring along with me (carefully, of course). Unfortunately, the first winter there was quite new to me and when the snow started to fall in October, naturally, I was out of doors with my friends throwing snowballs and playing in the snow. I had forgotten about the ring--it was still on my finger--and, as you know, playing in the snow my finger began to freeze and before I knew it the ring fell off my finger. I was devastated.

We hunted in the snow; looked around; all of my friends down on their knees. We just couldn't find it. We decided to mark the spot and come spring, with the first thaw, we promised ourselves that we'd go out and look for it. In late April or early May of the following spring, we all went out at the first thaw, started digging around the area and, lo and behold, we found the ring.

I was just so happy. I thanked God for being so good to me. Of course, in the meantime, I hadn't told my father about it and during that period of time when I lost the ring until I found it, I carefully, carefully budgeted myself so I didn't have to borrow any money.

S: Did you tell your father later on about it?

K: Yes, after I graduated and got back I told him about it. I offered to return the ring to him. He said, "No, it's yours. You keep it."

S: Well, you had a guardian angel or somebody looking over you. (laughs)

K: Yes, I was very fortunate then because money was awfully tight and I was working my way through, so every dollar counted. I had to be sure that I could make it.

S: Tell me some more about Yale. I think you were going to tell me about some of the part-time jobs you had there. We got you through college and you had mentioned that the Depression hit while you were in law school.

K: I had to get an extra job. Fortunately, I had a very good professor in economics with whom I became good friends. He offered me a job as an assistant or a reader they would call it. It was my task to check all the examination papers that the professor would give to his students. At that time in the economics course they gave weekly examinations. It was my job to correct those weekly papers. I did very well. I was paid so much per paper. Just that position alone helped me a lot through law school. Plus, of course, waiting on tables periodically. Time was of the essence at that point because law was very demanding. I spent quite a bit of time correcting these papers, waiting on tables, shovelling snow and studying.

S: What year did you get your undergraduate degree?

K: I graduated in June of 1927 from college and in June of 1930 from Yale Law School. At the termination of my law school education again--I think I said earlier that friends of mine who lived in California decided to drive across the continent again, buying a cheap car. All chipping in. There were four of us. We drove across the continent in four and a half days to five days, got to San Francisco and worked our way home as I did when I graduated from Yale College in 1927.

When I got home, I worked with my father for the summer because the bar exams were not to take place until the fall. I thought that two or three months preparation for it would

be sufficient. I worked with my father's touring business. He had a very good touring business. I made some money.

Then I moved down to Honolulu with my uncle, Mr. Aluli, who had a spare room which I rented from him and locked myself in for two months studying and preparing for the bar exam.

S: I did want to ask you at what point you decided that you wanted to go to law school.

K: When I came back in 1927, I just had an ordinary college degree with a major in economics and a minor in English and history. Well, I couldn't get a job. It was 1927 and at that time there weren't very many openings for those of non-Caucasian ancestry in this town. Remember, this was 1927. I was offered a job, finally, with the territorial government as a clerk in the bank examiner's office. I thought that would not get me anywhere. I thought the best thing to do was to get into a profession where I would be my own boss; I wouldn't have to look for a job working for someone. I went to the banks, the sugar agencies. I went to everyone, but no luck.

I applied again to the Yale Alumni Association for another scholarship to the Yale Law School, which was readily granted to me for three years on a loan basis. So I went back to New Haven and had no trouble getting in. The classes at Yale Law School were very small, which was very nice. You were screened before you got in, so that once you got into Yale Law School you were sure that you could stay there as long as you did not flunk out.

S: So there wasn't much attrition.

K: No. Harvard was a little different. I thought of going to Harvard because, after all, it was a high-ranking law school. Their practice there was entirely different, as I found out. They would admit 300 or 400 students and after the first year if you didn't make the grade, you were let out. I didn't want to take that chance. I wanted to be sure of staying, so I opted to stay at Yale where, of course, I had wonderful friends.

We didn't stay on the campus. We had to live off the campus because they had no dormitories for the graduate students. I roomed with two Southerners. One was named John Bullock who later became a partner of Senator Robert Taft in his law firm in Cincinnati. Taft's firm was composed of Senator Taft, who was the senior member, and Edward Stettinius who was, I believe, Secretary of State under one of the presidents.



S: I think it was under Roosevelt.

K: Well, John became a senior partner and we always remained friends. John just died not long ago from a heart attack. He was a very successful lawyer and a community leader in Cincinnati where he lived.

The other roommate was from Tennessee, from Murfreesboro, where Governor Stainback, I think, came from. When this other roommate, whose name was Edward Leadbetter, which was a well-known name in Murfreesboro, came out here during World War II, I had him meet Governor Stainback and they became good friends; naturally, they had the same background. Ed went into a chemical company as an in-house lawyer and has since passed away. I'm the only one left of that threesome that roomed for three years in an apartment in New Haven.

S: And you stayed and worked there during the summers until you graduated and made your second trip across the country and back here.

K: I couldn't afford to come home; it was so expensive.

S: And you needed the money that you could earn there.

K: Yes, and as a matter of fact, I took some extra courses during the summer--courses that weren't really necessary, but I was interested in. After graduation in 1930 I came home and looked around for a job in a law firm. Well, that was the height of the Depression years in Honolulu and I couldn't get a job with the big law firms. Finally, I went to see Senator Heen. He had a law firm called Heen, Kelly, Stafford and Godbold. It was quite a nice law firm.

He felt sorry for me. Of course, he's non-Caucasian also. I told him that I'd tried all the other law firms. He said, "Ernest, I like you. You've got a good record. I could hire you with a little desk in the corner, but it will only pay you \$50 a month." I had no alternative. I took it at \$50 a month. I worked for a year and I did so well that he raised my pay to \$150 a month, which was a big plus.

That was the start of my legal career and later on I got into my political career through Senator Heen and his connection with the Democratic party. I was a Republican at that time. My father, as I told you, was a prominent Republican on the Big Island, having served as county chairman of the Republican party on the Big Island and also serving in the Legislature as a Republican.

After working with Judge Heen until 1934, Governor Poindexter was looking for a replacement for the position of Deputy Registrar of Public Accounts, which was in effect the

assistant treasurer of the Territory of Hawaii. Mr. [William] McGonagle was then the treasurer and he wanted to get someone local--part-Hawaiian, if possible. Judge Heen recommended me, but I had to become a Democrat in order to get that job. Well, I joined the Democratic party and got the job. To me it was a great big improvement because my pay went up to about \$350 a month, which was big money in those days. That was 1934.

S: Your father was still alive? (K nods affirmatively)  
How did he feel about your changing parties?

K: He felt very proud. I mean he was a little disappointed, but he realized it was an economic problem during the Depression and, of course, he had lost his business during the Depression so he felt that it was the right thing for me to do, regardless.

S: He was very proud of you, but he might have been a little happier if it had been a Republican position. But it was you that he was concerned about.

K: I served there for two years and had a wonderful experience in that position. I was in charge of corporations, insurance companies, all the banks in town, savings and loans, building and loan companies. in addition to serving as assistant treasurer to Mr. McGonagle. We became great personal friends. He was a gentleman and he knew and liked Peggy.

When Peggy and I decided to get married in 1936--mind you, I had joined the territorial government as Deputy Registrar of Public Accounts and Assistant Treasurer in 1934 --she was then working at the [Honolulu] Academy of Arts. She had previously worked with Sir Peter Buck at the Bishop Museum. She was primarily an anthropologist and a museum lecturer in Hawaiiana. She could not get a field job in anthropology, which was what she was interested in, because at that time, apparently, women in the field work of anthropology were frowned upon. Margaret Mead was the only one who made the grade and she became very famous. We had the great fortune of meeting her when she would come through here.

Anyway, Peggy was at the Academy of Arts where Nancy Corbett was working. They became great friends. Nancy was married to Gerald Corbett, who was judge later on and also Secretary of Hawaii following me. He was also a law clerk in the same firm that I worked with, with Judge Heen. Apparently, they were giving a dinner party and needed an extra man because of Peggy, I guess. They invited me to squire Peggy and that's how I met her.

We got married and this is an interesting little sideline in our social life. Mr. McGonagle thought it was a great idea that as a wedding present he would give me a membership in the Oahu Country Club. Now, you must remember what the Oahu Country Club was like at that time--very, (what would you call it?) very exclusive and to have a non-Caucasian applicant was unheard of. When I heard about the controversy, I told McGonagle, "Never mind. It was very nice of you to think of me in that respect, but I don't care. I'm a tennis player; I'm not a golfer." He said, "It's a matter of principle, and I'm going to see this through."

He and a very close personal friend of mine from Hilo, Art Schoen, who was then a member, apparently worked it so that I did become a member. To make a long story short, in twenty-five years I'd served on the board of directors for three terms, another extra term as ex officio, and finally became president of the Oahu Country Club in 1961, I think much to the chagrin of those who opposed my admission. I have been a member of the country club for fifty years now, and the other day the board of directors invited me up and toasted me with champagne for being a member for fifty years. I'm one of the oldest members now and they made me a Special Honorary Member of the country club. That was one phase of our social life.

S: That was real progress.

K: Well, of course, now all the clubs here admit non-Caucasians. It's quite nice; it's a well-coordinated community with no great biases and prejudices.

Another thing that was amusing. After I left government service in 1945--this country club incident was in 1936 (fifty years ago)--but after I left government service in 1945 I was proposed for the Pacific Club. I was proposed by Herman Von Holt and former Governor Lawrence Judd. I got into the Pacific Club very nicely, without any problems, and later on served on the board of governors there. I was able to make my way through these clubs without much problem. Some of my days at the Pacific Club were happy days because we entertained there a lot. I've resigned since my retirement because I couldn't afford to carry several clubs. I used to belong to the Waialae Country Club also where I loved to play golf. I kept the Oahu Country Club because it's right across the street from my home here.

Anyway, let's get back to 1936 when I was with Mr. McGonagle. I had been asked to join that department for another reason also. The Chinese American Bank was in trouble. Of course, banks were under the supervision of the Treasury Department. I was assigned, particularly, to take care of the liquidation of the Chinese American Bank. That was a horrendous job. I spent a lot of my time there working

out that problem and finally got it on the way towards rejuvenation. The Chinese American Bank finally became the Liberty Bank, I believe. It didn't go out of business completely. It changed its name, got new capital, got a new board of directors and continued to serve the Chinese community.

I worked with McGonagle for two years and made several trips to New York selling bonds because, as you know, the territory financed its projects by bonds. I learned the bonding business and the treasury business quite well. In 1936 the Auditors Department, which had charge of the auditing and control of accounts, was in trouble. The governor was not satisfied with the Auditor's performance and asked for his resignation. He then asked me if I would serve as Auditor of the Territory of Hawaii. I said to the governor, "You know I'm not an accountant. I'm an attorney." He said, "What we need there is somebody to reorganize that department and get it squared away. You can hire accountants to come in and help you with the technical phases of accounting and auditing."

I accepted the job on the condition that as soon as that would be reorganized and well on its way, I would resign and get back to the practice of law, either privately or, as I told the governor, I might like to get into the Attorney General's office for further experience. In two years I reorganized the Auditor's Department. I went to the mainland and I studied new procedures and straightened out that department so that I felt I could leave it in good hands. I resigned in 1938 and the governor then said, "Look, we have an opening in the Attorney General's office as Assistant Attorney General, the number two man, to Mr. [Joseph V.] Hodgson, the Attorney General." I said, "Wonderful! That's exactly what I would like. I wouldn't want to stay there all the time. I eventually want to get back to the private practice." I served as the Assistant Attorney General until World War II, which was 1941.

My assignment was most interesting. I was in charge of the public utilities and taxes. The variety of work that I did was terribly interesting. Before World War II came along, it was evident that something was happening. Just prior to December 7, the town was on alert. It was not on full alert, but semi-alert, and there had been much movement of military here and defense workers were coming in. More aircraft were coming in; more ships were coming in--battleships, cruisers and so forth. The town was full of military; Army, Navy, Air Force. They were practicing continually. You'd see bombs dropping, but with white smoke showing that it was not real.

On the morning of December 7, 1941, I was then in charge of condemnations (that was another department I was head of)

of land. We were condemning Keehi Lagoon for a seaplane base for the Navy. On the morning of December 7, Rhoda Lewis, who was Deputy Attorney General and who was my immediate assistant, met with Herbert Austin, an engineer, and his staff down at Keehi Lagoon around seven o'clock to get a general layout of the place for this seaplane landing base. We met out there and while we were out there, these planes came in from over the horizon.

We thought they were our own planes still practicing. But no, all of a sudden, "Boom!" and the ground would shake. We were next to Pearl Harbor. Instead of white smoke coming out, we saw flames and black smoke. We thought, my God something's wrong! We didn't know what was going on. It continued, "Bang! Boom!" We saw these planes and black clouds. We rushed to our cars, turned the radio on and that's when Web Edwards' famous, "Get off the streets. We're being attacked by an enemy force..."

There was nothing else to do but break up. I told Rhoda--she was a single woman--she still is--I said, "You rush to Iolani Palace," because we had the civil defense procedure all worked out prior to that in anticipation of possible warfare. The Civil Defense Act had passed the Legislature and had been set up with Ed Doty as head of civil defense. I said, "You go over there and stay there until I find out what's going on. I'll rush home to see how Peggy is."

In the meantime, the whole town had been alerted to get gas masks, to put blankets over the windows in order to shield lights at nighttime. We were all advised and instructed to fill our bathtubs with water. We were all given gas masks. Babies were given little containers of oxygen in case of gas attacks. We were advised to store canned foods for any emergency. We were advised to build bomb shelters, which I did in my front yard here--although our friends across the streets, the Dowsetts, had a huge cement basement which they said was much better than a bomb shelter in case of an emergency.

Anyway, the point was that I said that I had to go home to see how Peggy and Ann were getting along. Ann was just a baby. Still in a crib. Coming in from Pearl Harbor, shells were falling all around me. I suppose they were shells from our antiaircraft guns because, apparently, everybody was panicky and I guess mistakes were made. I don't know, but you could follow it up by reading the newspapers and books on it. I have not read any books on it.

One of my dear friends, a lawyer friend, was killed by one of these antiaircraft shells. It just happened to land on his home and killed him. I didn't know that until later. I rushed home here and told Peggy that we were being attacked

by Japan. At that point we knew it was Japan. I told her to get everything ready because I may have to go down to Iolani Palace.

Just then the phone rang and it was the Governor. "Ernest?" "Yes." "This is Governor Poindexter. We're being attacked by Japan. Come down immediately to the office and round up as many of your attorneys as you can." At that time I was acting Attorney General. Mr. Hodgson, the Attorney General, was on vacation. He had gone to Michigan.

I rushed down and, of course, Rhoda Lewis was there already. We started telephoning as many of the attorneys as we could get to come in. We were able to get I remember, Eddie Sylva, Tamao Monden, Kenny Young. Anyway, we got in enough of a working staff plus secretaries so as to do things that were necessary. Many proclamations had to be issued under the Civil Defense Act.

We got down there and got the crew organized. The Governor, of course, and his staff were right across the hallway. On the second floor of Iolani Palace the wing on the ewa side was occupied by the Governor and his aide and his staff and the Secretary of Hawaii and his staff. On the Waikiki side was all Attorney General's office, my staff, the library and so forth.

I guess it must have been about eight-thirty or nine o'clock. In the meantime we were battling out initial proclamations--no right to assemble--and getting ready to prepare proclamations for rationing of food, gasoline--all that sort of thing. Just getting ready.

The Governor called. "Ernest, I just got a call from [Lt.] General [Walter] Short. He's coming in. He wants to see me. Things are very serious according to the General and I think you'd better come over when he comes in." In no time at all--in about fifteen minutes--in comes General Short. I think he was at [Fort] Shafter or out in that area. He had his staff--Colonel Green, Major Morrison and several others. They were in their boots, had revolvers, perspiring. They came in to see the Governor.

The Governor buzzed for me right away. I came in. General Short said, (I can't quote the exact words, but this in general is what he said.) "We're in a very serious situation. The damage has been terrible. We can't tell how much. Our ships have been bombed; several of our battleships are down; cruisers have been damaged; our planes have been strafed; many men have been killed; we don't know how many. We're in a situation where we're desperate. If the Japanese came back again, they could take the Islands. I've got to have control of the situation because I don't know what the situation's like, but I've got to have control because the

Japanese might come back. If they do, they can take the island. I've got to have martial law."

The Governor said, "I'll have to call the President." He had a direct line. Tried to reach the President and couldn't reach him. "Try to get me Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes," who was in charge of Insular Possessions, including the Territory of Hawaii. Got through to him. The Governor told him what General Short said. I don't know what went on between the two of them because this was a telephone conversation.

They talked back and forth for about ten minutes about the seriousness of the situation and, I guess, finally Ickes said, "Okay." They didn't know if there were any loyal Japanese here or not, if there were any spies, and of course what General Short said about the situation being serious, why, I guess martial law was indicated. The Governor stood up and went to a safe in the corner. He opened the safe and pulled out a document which apparently had already been prepared for martial law. Who prepared it I don't know, but it was in a different type from our typewriters, and prior to this situation I know that Joe Hodgson, the Attorney General, had been rather nervous and had been seeing the Governor continually. This was prior to December 7, so maybe they were forewarned about this possibility and had been presented this document by the military. I don't know.

Nevertheless, the Governor said, "Ernest, here's a proclamation of martial law. I want you to put it in form for me to sign and see whether it complies with the Territorial Organic Act." I rushed back to my office and called in Rhoda Lewis. The two of us studied it, checked the Organic Act, which was our constitution at that time, found it to be in order. So we had it put in executive proclamation form for the Governor to sign, finished it, took it over, the Governor signed it and that was the declaration of martial law. It went over the air immediately.

Later General Short said, "I think, Governor, I would like offices here so we can work together with you." I had to give up my office to Colonel Green, who was then to be appointed the military governor. I moved into Hodgson's office. Hodgson had a reserve commission as a colonel in the Army and when he came back from his vacation he immediately said to the Governor, "I want to resign as Attorney General. I feel it's my duty to go back to the Army."

I served as acting Attorney General while Hodgson was away. When he came back and went into the Army as a colonel, I stayed on as Attorney General but I was itching to get into the fray because I felt it was my duty to do so. Events happened, but Poindexter was not reappointed governor.

Stainback, who was a federal judge then, was appointed Governor. At that point, although I was Attorney General, I had also been appointed to a judgeship on Kauai. My appointment had been made prior to the declaration of World War II, but my commission had been sent to Honolulu, Hawaii, Philippine Islands. They lost it for months; they never could find it. Although I was confirmed by the Senate as a judge, I could never accept the position because my commission never arrived here. By the time they found it, World War II took place.

Then when Governor Stainback was appointed governor, he said, "Ernie, you're not going to be a judge. I need help. I'm a federal judge. I know nothing about the government. You've been Treasurer, you've been Auditor, you've been Assistant Attorney General, you've been Attorney General. I want you to be at my right hand. I want you to help me."

I had to turn down the judgeship, which caused some problem in Washington because they thought I was reniging on an appointment by President Roosevelt. Stainback had to wire that this was an emergency and wanted me particularly because of my background, and to please allow me to not accept the judgeship but to be appointed as Secretary of Hawaii. That's what they call the Lieutenant Governor today. That's how I became Secretary of Hawaii and moved over across the way to the office on the ewa side of Iolani Palace.

S: And what year did this appointment take place?

K: That was in 1942. I served there until I resigned when the war ended, when an armistice was declared. I told the Governor, "I want to go back to law." He said, "Well, the position of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court is open. Do you want it?" I said, "No." He said, "Well, you can have it. I wish you'd take it. If you don't want it, you take it and stay there until I'm ready to retire and then I'd like to be the Chief Justice and then you can go back to the practice of law."

I said, "Governor, thank you very much, but I want to get back to the practice of law immediately," because Judge Heen, who gave me my first job, was willing to take me back as a partner. I wanted to get back into active practice and start earning money for my family. At that time the pay of government offices was very low, very low. I think as Attorney General I got \$1,000. The Secretary of Hawaii only got \$1,500. Of course, maybe at that time that was a lot of money, but it wasn't enough to support a family. (laughs)

S: And it wasn't nearly what you could make in private practice.



K: No, no. Of course not. Anyway, during that period of World War II--I'd like you to take a look at the album--you can see all the different activities that took place. Proclamations to start gas rationing, food rationing, no assembly or public gatherings, the theaters were all closed, the courts were closed, which was a big thing that Garner Anthony fought against because we had no jury trials. If you got arrested for any crime, you were tried by a military judge. If it was a serious crime, still by a military court. So you were not being judged by your peers according to the U. S. Constitution, but by a military court. That's what Garner Anthony fought for after the Battle of Midway when things looked very good. At least the Japanese had a terrible setback and there was probably no danger in the future from them.

S: Going back actually to December 7, how long did it take to have this final proclamation of martial law that you prepared?

K: It took about an hour for study and typing--that's all--and then the Governor signed it and it immediately went over the air. I think Rhoda Lewis is the only one today who can remember it, but she's not well. I've been asked about it...

#### END OF TAPE 2/SIDE 1

K: Rhoda Lewis, who was my assistant in the Attorney General's office, and I worked on the martial law proclamation that was handed me by the Governor and checked it against the Territorial Organic Act and put it in proper proclamation form for the Governor to sign. It took about an hour or an hour and a half, I suppose.

Those were tense times. The staff worked day and night. I didn't see Peggy for two nights. I couldn't come home. We stayed down there at Iolani Palace. When I finally came home, it was a total blackout. Of course we issued blackout proclamations. You couldn't move around town without special headlights. As Attorney General then I was given a special pass to take me anywhere.

Even at that, it was very frightening because driving in the dark you'd hear, "Halt! Who goes there?" A lot of these Home Guard boys were quick on the trigger and some people were shot at accidentally. It was not safe to drive at night even with a pass.

S: How long do you think it was before people here felt one hundred percent sure that they weren't going to be invaded? How long did that fear last for you personally?

K: That fear continued even through the Battle of Midway because we weren't even sure at that time that the Battle of Midway was the turning point of the war until later on.

S: People didn't recognize that at the time it happened.

K: No, it was a great victory, but we didn't realize that it had apparently wiped out most of the Japanese fleet so that they couldn't come back again. As time went on we could tell when the military said that we'd no longer have blackouts; we'd have brownouts, which allowed a little more light. Then you could take up your blinds. At that point we began to feel that it was safe.

Then, of course, the 442nd was beginning to show their valor and prove that the Japanese here were faithful. Apparently there was no real significant arrest of any spies of Japanese-American ancestry. I think the Japanese consul here was more involved in spy activities than any local Japanese that I know of unless that has been revealed otherwise since then, but I haven't heard anything.

S: No, I've never read of one actual case of espionage or whatever. Also, I understand that the number of Japanese sent to the mainland was a very small percentage of the Japanese population.

K: A very small amount went to the mainland. Some went to Molokai, which was much better because they were practically at home. Some of my good friends were involved there, but of course, you can't help it. That was a safety measure that unfortunately proved...well, they shouldn't have done it.

S: It was the hysteria of the moment.

K: Yes, and of course, I suppose playing it safe because you can never tell.

S: Actually, how could people on the mainland judge what was going on here? They didn't know the people out on this little island the way the people living here did.

K: The people knew here and that's why the 442nd was started. It first started with the Japanese boys here of American-Japanese ancestry volunteering as a Home Guard. Then from the Home Guard they went to another category known as the Varsity something or other, and finally they volunteered to go away and formed the 442nd Battalion. They became famous throughout the whole war and proved themselves.

The Governor was away at that point and I had to give a departing speech to them from Iolani Palace. It made me weep to see them leave. Fortunately, I was on the second floor

talking down to them on the ground floor in front of Iolani Palace so they couldn't see my tears. But bidding them goodbye, wishing them well, showing their patriotism. I spoke without a written statement.

S: That would be very emotional.

K: It was. Some of them were my friends. Anyway, I don't know what else I can tell you about World War II. As things eased off I asked the Governor when, as and if I got myself settled downtown, could I leave. He said, "Sure." I left and I forget if it was Oren E. Long or Gerry Corbett who followed me. That could be checked.

S: Although Ann was a young child during World War II, I'm sure Peggy kept active.

K: Oh yes, of course. She joined all sorts of things. She did volunteer work around here with the Red Cross. She did whatever she could. Of course, as things eased off, she had to give up some of that because we had these social activities we had to do with the military. When you look in my album, you see these receptions that we had to go to at Pearl Harbor with Admiral Nimitz and Admiral Furlong and the dinners at Washington Place and all that sort of thing, which was a must in those days to maintain a good relationship with the military.

S: That would be time consuming, too.

K: Oh, yes. But it was very nice. Admiral Nimitz was a very fine gentleman. General Richardson also was, but on the other hand he was very caustic when he got into his fight with Garner Anthony over martial law.

S: How did you feel personally about it say after the Battle of Midway? Did you agree that it was time to...?

K: There was no question about it. I could see that the judicial process of trial by jury and the courts...I mean, the military knew nothing about law. You might be arrested for embezzlement and before you knew it you landed in jail without a jury trial. Things like that. Traffic accidents were a farce. If you got into a traffic accident, it depended on who was sitting up there at the desk and whether he had a headache or how he felt. He'd probably say to give two pints of blood or he might fine you \$150 or he might...he might say anything. There was no rule by which he was governed.

S: It was totally capricious.

K: Whatever came to his mind, I think. I only saw the results. My friends said, "I had to go and work at such and

such a place and give so many hours of work." Another one said, "I got fined \$300," and so forth and so on.

Then, of course, when you got to a serious violation like embezzlement or robbery, burglary, assault and battery, then you went down to the military court at Pearl Harbor. At one time they wouldn't permit civilian lawyers to defend these individuals. They appointed a military advocate to defend the person and some of them had no legal training at all. That irritated the local population, and that's why Garner Anthony went with Governor Stainback to see President Roosevelt to try to get martial law lifted. He couldn't do it and that's when this suit was brought in the federal courts here. Garner Anthony's book, which I have never read I must confess, lays out the whole story. [Hawaii Under Army Rule]

S: As you said, that pretty well covers your part in World War II.

K: There were a lot of things that we had to do during World War II that I can't recount now because every day there was something. There was a problem with this and that. Sometimes when the Governor was on the mainland in Washington we'd have telephone conversations as to what should be done in this situation, not to disturb their situation and so forth and so on.

S: You were starting to tell me about getting back into private practice. What year was that?

K: I got back into private practice with Senator Heen in 1945. Of course, after that life became different. You get back into the civilian population. I dove into all sorts of community activities in addition to practicing law. I had a very good practice. I was able to build a good practice and have a nice, good, steady income.

I had been offered several judgeships since then, but I turned them down because I felt that I had given enough of my life--ten years of it--to government service and I owed it to Peggy and family that I build up a future for us. I didn't feel that I wanted to get back into the judiciary because you live a different sort of life there. Sort of like living in an ivory tower. I wanted to get down into the city, into the community and do things. I got into a lot of charities.

S: For example? Name some of them for me.

K: Oh my, I started the Bishop Museum Association to help build up the Bishop Museum; I was one of the original founders of Big Brothers of Hawaii; I was one of the original trustees of Hawaii Loa College; I was on the board of the YMCA; I was a director of the Red Cross; a director of the

Cancer Society. I started many things that are going great guns today. I'm sort of retired today, but my one charity that I love is the Institute for Human Services. I go over there and help them out. Claude DuTeil is executive director. I like him and I want to help him.

S: Ernie Albrecht called him a living saint.

K: Absolutely, absolutely. Ernie's a director; I'm a director, but I go down there and cook. I haven't lately because of my back and my leg, but I have gone down there and cooked for dinner. It's good fun.

S: Tell me some more about Peggy. Peggy wasn't exactly a local girl. Tell me about her background.

K: She was a great gal. She was born in Mexico. Her father was a mining engineer and had silver mines in the town of Oaxaca, which by the way we visited about six or seven years ago or tried to visit. It was up in the hills and we couldn't get up there. We got the train, which took us to the end of the line, and we could see the mines up in the hills.

They had to leave because Pancho Villa at that time was waging a war against foreigners. Fortunately for Mr. Hockley, he was warned by his Mexican friends to get out and get out immediately because the guerrillas were coming up that way to drive them out. Peggy said that in the middle of the night her father got together Peggy, Isabel and Mary, the sisters, and of course, his wife. They got on some burros and trotted in the middle of the night until they hit the railroad lines, got on a train and got back to Mexico City safely.

From there they went to Canada. Peggy's mother was a Canadian, the Irwin clan, and Hockley, her father, was an Englishman. They lived there for a while, while he sort of looked around for a job and finally decided that he would try his luck out in China, the Orient. He left the family there and started on his way to the Orient; stopped off here in Hawaii, and got a job on the Big Island at the Pahala Plantation as a water engineer. He liked it there, so he sent for his family. Peggy came over and they lived at the plantation there. That's how Peggy got to love Hawaii.

S: Approximately what year did he make the move over here? About how old would Peggy have been when she moved here?

K: Peggy was about four when they moved out of Mexico. She was born in 1911. That was about 1915 or 1916. Probably 1917 was when they came out here. I'm only guessing, but she was a youngster. Finally, her father became Surveyor General of Hawaii. His task was to set up triangulation stations for

the Islands so the property could be surveyed and properly described, because before the Great Mahele, descriptions of land were "from that big tree to that rock" and so forth.

At that point Peggy's mother had died, so Isabel and Mary, the two older ones, were at Punahou, and Peggy was a youngster not yet ready for Punahou. Her father would take her along on these trips and that's how she came to love Hawaii and knew the birds, the trees, the plants and the people. Her great love for Hawaii started there, her knowledge of Hawaii and Hawaiiana. When she grew older, her father sent her to Punahou and she stayed at the "Hash House," which was the dormitory. Recently Punahou had her make tapes of her experiences at Punahou, and I was told by them that they were the best tapes of old-timers of their experiences and the situations of Punahou at that time. I haven't listened to them because it breaks my heart to hear her voice.

S: Have they transcribed the tapes?

K: Yes, they have. It's all written, too.

S: Wouldn't you rather read it?

K: Not yet.

S: I would think that reading it would not be as difficult as listening.

K: Yes, I have the tapes and I have the transcription.

Anyway, she was educated at Punahou and from Punahou she went to the University of Hawaii, then she went to Wheaton College in Massachusetts, and then went to Yale to study anthropology. That's how she got into anthropology and knew Dr. Murdoch and Margaret Mead and the anthropologists of that period. When she came back here, she was able to get a job at the Bishop Museum under Sir Peter Buck, who was director. I had already met Sir Peter Buck and liked him very much. She worked under Sir Peter Buck for a while until she got a job at the Academy of Arts as museum lecturer and, finally, head of the education department.

In the meantime she got interested in Hawaiiana and became president of the Hawaii Historical Society, she became trustee of Punahou, she became trustee of Hanalei School and Seabury Hall. She was also Community Director with the East-West Center. She was a very capable and remarkable woman. She would give beautiful lectures on Hawaii and Polynesia. I'm just touching her background lightly.

In the meantime we loved to travel, so we made it a point from 1956 on that we would travel every year somewhere

in the world (finances permitting). So we did. Every year we did, except one year when I had an operation on my knee. We were going to Egypt and we had to cancel that. Then this last time when she had cancer, we cancelled a trip through France.

S: And she continued working at the Academy after you were married?

K: No, I forgot an important segment in her life. From the Academy, the Department of Public Instruction got interested in her and they put her on a contract to teach Hawaiiana in the public schools. From there, the East-West Center got started and they immediately hired her to become Director of Community Relations in order to get these Far East students who come here into the community--visiting and meeting local families. Families would have them for Christmas or Thanksgiving, take them on tours, get them oriented. She did a great job there. She organized trips for these students throughout the whole state--to Hawaii, to Kauai, to Maui--having all these different families help out. It was a great success.

Then when I was about to retire, I told Peggy, "You know, we're getting along in years. I think you'd better retire. Let's enjoy life together." She retired and we did the things we wanted to do. I still had my few charities and she had a few charities, too, that she worked with.

S: And Ann was born in what year?

K: She was born in 1939. We sent Ann away to college. She went to Smith and she didn't like Smith. It was too, well, I suppose you would say it was too conservative, too classical, too Eastern.

S: Too straitlaced. Ann had gone to Punahou, too?

K: Yes, Ann went to Punahou and then from Smith she transferred to Stanford, which she liked better. She got into art and religion. She came back to Hawaii and got married. She has two boys by her first marriage. Now she's living with her second husband on Orcas Island, Vancouver, in the San Juan Straits.

S: That's beautiful country. I haven't been there, but I've seen pictures and read articles about it.

K: I don't know what else to tell you except that since leaving government, my life has always been the practice of law. One of the famous cases I got into was the Massie case. You've heard of it?

S: Oh, yes.

K: Well, that was in 1931. I had just gotten back from law school and was working with Judge Heen as a law clerk. We would work day and night. I would do all of the legal research, naturally. I was just a youngster, but I would be in court every day learning the technique, the practice of criminal law. It was quite a case.

S: Gerry Corbett was there at that time? I believe that was when and where Nancy met him. He asked her if she would like to observe the case.

K: That's right. Gerry and I were there. That's how we became great friends. And Nancy, of course, became a great friend of Peggy's at the Academy.

S: Well, that was quite a case. It's been over fifty years and they're still writing about it. What was your opinion at that point of Clarence Darrow?

K: I hate to say so, but Clarence Darrow, I don't think, was one who was well versed in legal law. By that I mean I don't think he had a good strong legal education, but he was a great orator and he could persuade you just by his mastery of the English language. But he had good assistants helping him, I presume. In those days I don't know whether those old-timers went to law school, because some of them just learned law as clerks or learned by frequenting the courts.

S: Osmosis.

K: Yes, but there was no question about it. He was a great lawyer, a great orator. In the Massie case, Kelly, who was a partner of Judge Heen, became the special prosecutor. He left the firm in order to try the case against Darrow. He wanted that opportunity. Of course, he won because the Fortescues and the Massies were found guilty of the murder of this Hawaiian boy. That was the second case. The first case in which Mrs. Massie was presumed to be raped was a hung jury which was never retried again. It lasted too long. It was very tiring.

S: I've heard the name in connection with assisting Clarence Darrow. Correct me if I'm wrong, but I understand that Montgomery Winn did an excellent job.

K: Yes, Monty Winn, correct. He was a good lawyer.

S: I had heard that at that point Clarence Darrow had peaked, shall we say. He wasn't as effective as he had been.



K: That's why I said that. I didn't know that he had peaked.

S: Other people have commented that he wasn't what they expected.

K: He wasn't what I expected. That's why I said that he was a little weak, but he was a good orator. But Monty Winn was very helpful. There was no question about it. Poor Monty died early, unfortunately.

S: I'd like to talk a little bit about the travels that you and Peggy started in 1956 if you would cover some of that. What was the first really outstanding trip that you took?

K: I think the first outstanding trip that we took was to Paris, France, because Peggy wanted to give Ann a European experience. During one of the summers I said, "You go over. I'll buy you a car. You get Ann to have a friend along to keep her company and you tour Europe." They did France; they did everywhere; they did it for four months. I said, "I'll join you for the last two months."

That, for me, was a wonderful experience with Ann and her classmate and Peggy. We drove all over Europe practically; France, the northern part of Italy, Switzerland and England. Later on, of course, we went to England quite often when we visited Peggy's brother-in-law who married Peggy's sister Mary.

I still correspond with him. He's a nice Englishman. He was an Air Force Colonel. I remember when I first met him. Peggy said, "You have to meet my English brother-in-law." I thought, "Oh my, what's this going to be like?" Well, he's a chubby person. He's tall and he's handsome. He has one of these little mustaches; he wears black shoes with gray trousers and a dark coat and a bowler and a black umbrella. Typical, typical English.

When we first met, he looked at me and he welcomed me, "My Polynesian brother-in-law." I knew right away we were going to get along well and we did. He's a good cook; I'm a good cook; we take turns cooking. He's a great connoisseur of wines, so we had great times together.

S: Did he ever come to Hawaii to visit?

K: Oh yes, we persuaded him to come out here and we had a great time. We gave him a luau. We had Hawaiian music because Peggy's sister loved Hawaiian music and we would send them records, and whenever they visited she wanted to stay up nights listening to Hawaiian music and singing Hawaiian music.

Anyway, we travelled with the Kimballs, Richard and Mary Kimball. I don't know whether you know them.

S: Yes, I've had the opportunity to talk to Kingie.

K: We are very close friends and on many occasions we travelled as a foursome, hiring a car with a driver. We've driven all over Europe together. We went up to Switzerland to see Ann when she married her first husband. They had a chalet at Gstaad. We went up there to visit them for a day or two. That's when I bought a Mercedes, through Ann, and drove all over Europe with the Kimballs.

Well, we've been all over Europe; we've been to France, Spain, Monte Carlo, Italy, Portugal, Holland, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, all the Balkan States--Bulgaria, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Austria, Greece, Turkey, Iran (before it got closed up); India, Kashmir, Katmandu, Bali, Singapore, Hong Kong, Jakarta, Fiji, Samoa--Western Samoa, Eastern Samoa. I forgot Japan, China, Tahiti, New Zealand, Easter Island, Pitcairn, Africa, Galapagos, the United States, Canada.

I want to go to Antarctica. They tell me it's a wonderful experience and I want to try it. Peggy and I had a great life after retirement and we enjoyed each other and we enjoyed the same things, which was nice. I was terribly interested in Hawaiiana and so was she. That's why we spent a lot of time in the Pacific. Peggy went back to Tahiti without me several times. I just went twice. We had friends in Tahiti and Moorea.

S: Since you were both so keenly interested in Hawaii, I'm wondering if you ever discussed the future of Hawaii with Peggy. Was she concerned about the growth of tourism? Did that bother her?

K: Well, it bothered her in that it was beginning to make Hawaii no longer the Hawaii that we loved and knew. But we realized that progress was progress and there was nothing you could do about it, except hope that growth was carefully planned so Hawaii would grow gracefully. But it's gotten out of hand and it can't be, in my opinion, rehabilitated. You just have to build around what you have and do the best you can.

I hope that some day they can stop this, because we have a limited supply of artesian water and you can't supply the population if it gets out of hand. The water that we have in our artesian wells is limited.

S: At this point Hawaii seems almost totally dependent on the military and tourism. Looking ahead, do you see anything else as alternative possibilities?

K: One can never tell. The offer of C. Brewer for this satellite landing or whatever you call it might be the start of a new phase of activity which might bring business, and the development of the energy projects over in Kona might be helpful. I don't know. The fact that we're so isolated here and dependent upon freight coming in and out makes it so very expensive to live here, as you well know. The newspapers say this is the most expensive place in the United States to live and it could get worse. Look at the amount of money you're paying for land now. It's ridiculous! Anyone wanting to go into business now has to pay a high price just for rental space. That pushes everything up.

And labor, of course, is demanding its share of business growth. The nurses, as you know, have just asked for an increase. The cost of living will reach a point where later on some people just can't make ends meet. Our kids will have problems getting jobs. There aren't that many jobs going around. Not long ago there was a release from the HVB that the number of local residents living on the mainland exceeded a quarter of a million. Kids and families have moved away because they can't get jobs here. That's a lot of people.

S: And people who, given the choice, would rather be here.

K: Absolutely, absolutely. My two grandsons who have graduated from college are looking for jobs on the mainland. I would like to have them here, but there's no opportunity here for them. There again in my own family. And Ann has a beautiful home in Lanikai. No. She's moved to the mainland. She says it's too crowded here; traffic is terrible; pollution; everything. She likes it at Orcas Island [Washington] where it's clean, pleasant, small population, you can get to know everyone. No problems, no burglary.

S: Well, every day the traffic on this island gets worse.

K: It's hard to think about the future in my case because I'm eighty years old and I realize that my time here's short, so I don't project. I'm living day by day because I have to make every day count. If I were a younger person, I'd be worried about the future and be planning and thinking, which I did many years ago. I planned to live this way. I planned it with Peggy. Peggy and I knew what our objective was; we wanted to have a nice home, we wanted to have friends, we wanted to have comfort and we wanted to have enough money to travel and do things we wanted to do. It all happened, but you have to plan.

S: And work hard.

K: Plan and work at it and not give up and say, "Well, geez, I can't do it." That's why I didn't opt for a

judgeship because at that time judges weren't getting very much pay. I went downtown to work in a law firm and eventually did well.

S: That's what your mother had wanted you do to. To get the education to do that.

K: Exactly. Although today being a judge--the pension that you get and the pay that you get are good. No question about it.

S: How long did your parents live?

K: My mother lived until she was eighty-four; my father until he was eighty-three; my grandmother until she was eighty-four, which was pretty good for those days. But you see they lived in Hilo, a nice, pleasant town--no pollution. Everything nice. You lived off the land. It was a wonderful life. I just loved my childhood. Romping around barefoot and playing with your friends. It was a tiny, little town so your friends were right across the board--Japanese friends, Chinese friends, Hawaiian friends, haole friends--all in a little, small, well-knit community. They all respected each other, nevertheless. As I said before, I enjoyed my childhood there. The friends that I made there have lasted till now. A lot of them have died, but a lot of them are still alive and are still my friends. In all races, in all categories. I've made many friends in politics. A lot of them call me Ernie and I forget their names, but I know their faces and I welcome them.

S: I think with those good genes of yours you can plan on trips for at least the next ten years.

K: I hope so.

END OF TAPE 2/SIDE 2

January 26, 1987

S: After our last interview you showed me an article [Honolulu Star-Bulletin & Advertiser, October 24, 1976] that I wasn't familiar with regarding the Jack Burns oral history program--a tape that Mr. Burns had made shortly before his death--relating to the appointment of the governor of the Territory of Hawaii by President Harry Truman. Would you like to fill us in on that?

K: Coming back to the tape that Governor Burns made for oral history prior to his death. One day Mr. [Jerry] Burris of the Advertiser called me and said, "Ernie, have you looked over the tapes by Burns on the part that you played in the governorship of Hawaii?" I said, "No, I know nothing about it." "Well," he said, "Governor Burns admitted in the tapes

that he cheated you out of the governorship of Hawaii." He was then delegate to Congress, stationed in Washington, D. C., and discovered that my appointment was on President Truman's desk ready to be signed.

Prior to that, of course, people in Honolulu were backing me up for the governorship, and one day Walter Dillingham of Dillingham Corporation, who apparently had many friends in Washington, came to see me. He said, "Ernie, we're backing you up and I have good reason to believe that you'll be the next governor of Hawaii."

I was pleased to hear that, but then, of course, when Mr. Burris told me what had happened, it was quite a shock to me. Apparently, Burns discovered, as I said, that my appointment was on President Truman's desk. In this tape he said that he gave the secretary, Truman's secretary, a gift (I don't know what the gift was) to have her pull my appointment on his desk and put it at the bottom of the papers on his desk.

In the meantime, according to the tape, he telephoned [Mits] Kido, who was a member of the local Legislature at the time, and also Chuck Mau, an attorney and a friend of mine, and told them to see me and tell me that Burns would guarantee that I would be appointed governor of Hawaii if I gave him the right to veto or to appoint my whole cabinet. I said, "You mean from the Attorney General down to the Superintendent of Public Education and so forth?" They said, "Yes." Burns wanted the complete right to appoint my cabinet.

I came home and discussed it with Peggy and, of course, with Judge Heen, my senior partner. At that time, if you'll recall, the ILWU and the labor party were very strong--pushing, of course, Burns and the Democratic party for leadership here in Hawaii. This apparently was one way of getting into the territorial government through the governor's office--if I were appointed governor.

Naturally, I turned it down and, of course, as you'll notice from the article it says that Mau and Kido came to see me to make this proposal and I called them up and said I'd turn it down. Apparently, according to the article, Chuck Mau had told Burns that I was not getting myself into the Hawaiian community, which was wrong. He never came to see me; he just concluded so. If he'd come to see me, he would have known that I was president of the Hawaiian Civic Club during my younger days as an attorney. Also, I was one of the instigators of the scholarship fund, which raised money for scholarships for boys of Hawaiian ancestry to have further education in college.

I organized another group of young Hawaiians, a club called Mamaka Ailo, in order to have the young businessmen of Hawaiian ancestry get to know each other, associate with each other and help themselves. Among the early members of that club were Duke Kahanamoku, Neal Blaisdell, Judge McGregor, Norman Gilliland, who was vice president of Bishop Trust; David Bent, executive secretary of the Hawaiian Homes Commission and many other very important young men of Hawaiian ancestry. It was a great club. It started in 1951. I thought it would last for a few years--at least to get them together, but it's still going strong. Young businessmen of Hawaiian ancestry are very anxious to join the club to get to know each other and associate with each other; not only socially, but in business. Those are the things I've done, but Mau and Kido did nothing about finding it out. They concluded that I had sort of gotten away from my background of Hawaiian ancestry.

S: They figured you as the country club set at that point.

K: Exactly. I think at that time they were very envious of the fact that I was a member of the Oahu Country Club, which I eventually became president of, and I was a member of Pacific Club. I was invited to join the Pacific Club by former governor Lawrence Judd and Herman Von Holt. I eventually got on the board of governors of the Pacific Club. There was no way to hold me back; I was anxious to do my part, if you know what I mean.

You see, I think there was sort of a...maybe I should make no conclusion, but anyway they gave Burns the wrong impression. Well, I would not have gone for Burns' proposition anyway. What happened, I am told according to this article--this tape recording of oral histories--Burns saw or contacted Oren E. Long and apparently got enough Senators and Congressmen to back Oren E. Long against me, so Oren E. Long got the appointment.

S: You don't know if he (Oren Long) made an actual deal?

K: I have no idea. I didn't know about this background, of course, until it was disclosed in the oral history tape.

S: And this was approximately ten years ago that this all came out?

K: You have the date of the article. That was a great disappointment to me, of course. As I look back on it today, I'm sorry that I didn't become governor because I think the picture here would be a little different. But, anyway, that's water under the bridge.

I'm happy that I pursued my legal career and my career among the charities here in Hawaii and the contribution that

I've made since then. My wife and I had a very happy life. We travelled a lot.

S: We covered your travels a good bit, but I'd like to hear--since you brought up the subject of the various organizations in connection with this governorship story--I'd like to hear a little bit more about a couple in particular. You were quite interested in Foster Gardens.

K: Oh, yes. Through Peggy, my wife, I was exposed to Hawaiiana in all of its different forms and degrees. I got interested in plants of Hawaii among other things. I was fortunate enough to be asked to join the board of directors of Foster Gardens, which I accepted very gratefully and happily, because I was interested in flora of Hawaii.

I then spoke to Paul Weissich who was director and said, "Look, Paul, I would like to become a part of your active organization and do something like, for example, lecturing on Hawaiian plants." He said, "Perfect! I've been thinking about starting tours for the tourists on indigenous and endemic plants of Hawaii." I said, "Fine, I'll do that." Every Monday for an hour I would take tourists around Foster Gardens and lecture on the indigenous and endemic plants of Hawaii. That was a great experience for me, and I had to give it up when I had an operation on my knee and couldn't conduct the tours anymore.

S: The walking presented a problem.

K: Another thing happened recently which is a great joy to me. I've been an Episcopalian, through Peggy, since 1936 when we got married. Several months ago Dean Knight of St. Andrew's Cathedral asked me if I would stand for directorship of the chapter which runs St. Andrew's Cathedral. "Well," I said, "I'm getting along in years and I don't know whether I have the energy to do this sort of work. I'm sort of retiring from all of my charities." "Well," he said, "it won't be much work. Maybe once a month we meet and go over all the affairs of St. Andrew's--the board of directors does." "Well," I said, "if that's the case, okay, but I might not be nominated."

He said, "We took a poll and I think you'll make it." Two weeks ago they had election and I was appointed to the chapter board which runs the cathedral. That's another facet of life which is a great joy to me, because Peggy was also very active in affairs of St. Andrew's Cathedral. She was on the chapter board and then later became a member of the diocesan board which runs all the Episcopal churches in the state of Hawaii. Anyway, that's my latest contribution to charity.

- S: You wouldn't be happy unless you had a finger in some of this. You obviously have to recognize certain limitations as far as energy and so forth.
- K: That's true; I have to pace myself. As I told Dean Knight, I enjoy my work with the Institute of Human Services, but with my bad back I may have to give up the cooking at the Institute for street people. That takes a lot of physical work.
- S: Hopefully, the back will come along.
- K: I hope so. I've already made reservations to go to Antarctica in January of 1988. (laughs) I love these cruises and tours to unusual places. As I told you, I just got back from Pitcairn and Easter Island. That was a unique and interesting experience.
- S: Does it matter if you go to Antarctica in January or June?
- K: It does because January is summer down there at the South Pole and the penguins will be out mating and so forth and it will be kind of fun.
- S: Another thing you had mentioned. You had said somewhere along the line that you were a trustee of Hawaii Loa College and I think it went beyond that, did it not, for a while?
- K: Yes, it did. For a while I served as president of Hawaii Loa College. We were searching then for a president who had college experience in running a college. We finally chose Chandler Rowe who was president of Lawrence College. I think that's in Wisconsin. In the meantime until we found someone, some of us trustees took turns serving as president of Hawaii Loa College.
- S: Approximately what year was this? When it was being founded?
- K: Yes, yes. I served on the board for about twelve years and I forget the exact date. I finally resigned because I felt that younger people who had more contacts in the community than I had at that time should serve on the board. Running and starting a college is a question of raising money. You have to have money in order to get it going. That's what we did in the early years--raising money for a college that had no alumni. If you have alumni, you can always fall back on your alumni for help, but this was creating a new college from the very beginning; staffing it. Getting professors and getting your administration and officers and so forth takes money. We had to go out and raise money. It was difficult, but Castle Foundation, the Atherton Trust, McInerney Foundation--they all were enthused



about the college because it gave Hawaii a new source of education for mainland executives who came here with children who wanted a college education, but who wanted to stay here rather than go back to the mainland. We gave them another liberal arts college that they could attend. It served a good purpose in this community.

Another important thing--this college is oriented towards the East; by East I mean Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, and also the South Pacific to Tahiti, Fiji. We drew students from all over that area. Attracted them to the college because the college is like the East-West Center, sort of melding the East and the West there in an educational institution.

S: I wanted to ask you if Hawaii Loa has a religious affiliation?

K: No, it's religious oriented in that it was started by the four ministries; the Episcopalians, the Methodists, the Presbyterians and the Congregational Church, the United Church of Christ. Those four put up the seed money to start the college going. Mr. Harold Castle donated the land; 100 acres at the foot of the Pali for the institution. We wanted to build a fine institution there, so we hired one of the leading architects in the United States, after competition, to build the college.

S: The setting is magnificent.

K: Yes. I'm trying to think of his name. Bill Pereira, I think it was. An outstanding architect. However, that's not important at this point. The point was that we finally got it going and it now has a full enrollment. It has dormitories that house students from outside of the state.

S: And it's a liberal arts college. That's tough in this day and age. There are people who wouldn't even justify the existence of a liberal arts college, so it's an uphill battle.

K: You're absolutely right because we aren't specializing in engineering or anything. We try to build what we call "the whole man." A man who is well educated in all the liberal arts of the day. I think we're doing it successfully. Still, it's a question of finances I understand. But that was an interesting experience for me.

S: I think the fact that it's made it this far is a good sign.

K: It's a very good sign, although losing our last president was a blow because he was a good man, but he went on to higher--other institutions. We have a good man there

now, although I'm not acquainted with him since I resigned from the board. I understand he's working hard to build the college.

S: It's good to look back at some of these things that you were involved with at the beginning and see that they have survived and grown throughout the years.

K: Yes, it gives you a certain sort of pride of achievement, you know, being one of those who helped this community grow in the field of education. My present contribution will be the church. I hope to help St. Andrew's. I've served the community on the Chamber of Commerce; I've been on the board there. Also the board of directors of the Hawaii Visitors Bureau at that time and the executive board of the Bar Association. I've touched bases all around this community.

S: Exactly. It hasn't been confined to just the professional or the religious.

K: I felt that I should, if possible, return something to this community that helped me grow.

S: Well, you and Peggy both did a fantastic job in that respect.

K: I know she did. She was a woman of great quality and character. Terribly interested in education and children, the arts, anthropology. She had a wide field of activity. And the church, of course.

S: I feel that you were an outstanding couple and the good Lord brought you together because I can't think of two people who complemented each other more and had more common interests and who did so much.

K: Thank you. Did I touch base about our marriage?

S: We talked some about it.

K: Her father did not approve of our marriage.

S: You hadn't mentioned that.

K: Oh yes, oh yes. She was at the Art Academy at that time. I think she was director of education there. I met her and, naturally, my interest in Hawaiiana was her interest, too. We decided to get married and I asked her father who at that time was--I don't know whether he was retired or not, but at one time he was Territory of Hawaii Surveyor General. He had charge of the setting of the triangular stations for the different Islands. He was an

Englishman, and as I told you, they had escaped from Mexico and finally got here.

He didn't approve of our marriage at that time. Of course, I think it was because he thought interracial marriages had not reached a point where a couple could be happy. There were a lot of mixed marriages of male Caucasians and non-Caucasian females, but not the other way around where you had a non-Caucasian husband and a Caucasian wife. I think we were the first couple here in Hawaii of that mixture. When you look back...

S: Right. This is fifty years ago we're talking.

K: There were many marriages of Caucasian men and Hawaiian women and Chinese women, but not the other way around. He didn't think it would work and he disapproved of it very much so.

S: What about Peggy's mother?

K: Peggy's mother was dead. Nevertheless, Peggy and I got married. She cut loose from her father. Her father never forgave her for that even after I became an important political figure here. He was still alive when I was secretary of Hawaii and acting governor, but never forgave her.

He had remarried a New England woman who was quite well-to-do. After he died, she wrote to Peggy and asked for forgiveness. She said that she never approved of her husband's attitude, but, naturally, she wouldn't speak up. But after he passed away she asked for forgiveness and, naturally, we forgave her.

She wanted to meet me and Peggy. I didn't have a chance to meet her I was so busy, but Peggy would visit her on many occasions to see her. Of course, when she died, she left Peggy a nice little legacy. She was a well-to-do woman.

S: But Peggy's sisters were happy? You spoke about your English brother-in-law.

K: No, one sister was. We were great pals. As a matter of fact, he just wrote me about a month ago wanting to know if I would come on to England to visit with him and his new wife after my reunion at Yale. I'm going back to my sixtieth reunion.

S: When is that scheduled?

K: May 31st of 1987. I graduated in 1927, so this is my sixtieth. I have to miss my sixty-fifth reunion at Punahou

which falls at the same time, but as I explained to the Punahou secretary who called me, this will be the last organized reunion at Yale. After the sixtieth, they don't have any more organized reunions for classes, so I want to go back and see my friends who are still alive.

S: Oh, yes. Are you going to be able to do the England bit?

K: Yes, from there I'll go on to England.

S: (laughs) You might as well; you're two-thirds of the way there.

K: That's right. I've already had letters from classmates to visit with them before and after, which I will do, of course. I want to see them and then continue on to England, visit there for a while and come on back. On the way back I'll stop off in Toronto and see some of my friends there and then Vancouver and see my daughter at Orcas Island and then home.

S: That sounds like a pretty full schedule. You have to get that back into shape before May.

K: I have to and that's what I'm going to see the doctor about this morning.

S: Absolutely. But you were saying one of Peggy's sisters did not approve of the marriage.

K: No, she did not. I don't know why; I guess she felt like her father, I guess. Peggy had two sisters; Mary who married the Englishman, who we got along very well with; and the other was Isabelle, who died single. She did not approve. I guess she felt like her father.

S: I guess pioneers or ground breakers always have to expect opposition, but it hurts when it's in the family.

K: Well, it broke Peggy's heart, but she was a great wife; she stood by me.

S: Well, she knew what she had.

K: Of course, cutting loose from your parents is quite a step to take. Anyway, that's part of my background that's unhappy, but nevertheless it happened. Despite that, we had a great life together.

S: Yes, you did indeed. And you have your eighty-second birthday coming up in February?

- K: Yes, next month I'll be eighty-two, so I can look back with all the memories of my past which has been a very happy one.
- S: You've had a rich, full, wonderful life and there are still a lot of years to come. We talked about those good genes of yours.
- K: Did you read Peggy's book on the genealogy on my mother's side? [The Story of Alai: Our Hawaiian Chinese Heritage] She was going to do one on my father's side, but she passed away before she could tackle that. It took her about four to five years to do this little book on my mother's side.
- S: I'm sure it did. It's an outstanding contribution.
- K: Well, it sort of pulled the family together. It helped us discover relatives that we had in Hawaii and on the mainland--scattered all over the country--that we didn't know about until she did her research.
- S: You can tell that that work was done with a great deal of love and care; it reflects it.
- K: And accuracy. She had to be sure everything was accurate; no hearsay. She went straight to the Archives, the Bishop Museum, to the church. The Catholic Church and the Mormon Church keep good records, you know, of the old days.
- S: Yes, they always recorded the births, the baptisms, the communions, the weddings, the funerals.
- K: And the graveyards. She examined gravestones in Hilo and in Kau and Kohala and here in Honolulu.
- S: It's too bad that she didn't have the opportunity to do your father's side, but you can rejoice in what you have there.
- K: I wish I had the energy to do it, but I just haven't got the skill and technique that she had to do it. She was very good at it. The University of Hawaii sent a television crew down one day to interview her on her technique of doing genealogical research. It was quite interesting. I think they showed it over TV a number of years ago.
- S: Genealogy is a painstaking and time-consuming task. I guess you have to have a certain way of going about it to make all the pieces come together.
- K: She was working also on her side of the family, the Irwin clan, which goes back into the early sixteenth century

in England. There was a printed book on the early Irwin clan in England. She picked it up from there and brought it up to date. She didn't quite finish it, so upon her death I turned over all the records to one of her cousins to finish.

S: Hopefully, they'll follow through on that because the genealogy, as we've discovered, is fascinating.

K: After that TV interview, she had many calls from people who were interested in pursuing their family background. She had a lot of fun explaining it to them.

S: I think the interest in genealogy really got a shot in the arm from Alex Haley's Roots. I think after people read or watched...

K: She started way before that.

S: Yes, but I mean this made a lot of people aware.

K: No question about it, but she wanted to do it, as you read in the frontispiece, primarily for our grandsons. She very early promised that she would do it so that they would have a thorough knowledge of their ancestry here in Hawaii, their roots in Hawaii. Their father comes from Sewickley, Pennsylvania, and is very wealthy. She didn't want them to lose track of their background here. Of course, they haven't because Philip, the oldest boy, has my name for his Hawaiian name and the second boy didn't have a Hawaiian name. When he got older, he complained to me and Peggy that he wanted a Hawaiian middle name, so we gave him three names from my Hawaiian background and he chose one of them for his Hawaiian name. Now he's very happy that he has it.

S: Please explain your Hawaiian name.

K: Kapuamailani was given to me by my grandmother when I was born in February because at that time the narcissus blooms. The morning that I was born the narcissus in our living room had an unusual bloom of four large blossoms, I think it was, my grandmother explained to me. So she named me after those blossoms. Kapuamailani which means the heavenly flower or the flower from heaven. Kapua means the flower; mailani, from heaven or the beautiful flower.

S: If I'm not mistaken, you passed that name along to Ann.

K: It's customary to do that in Hawaiian circles, if you want to pass a name on to your children.

- S: It doesn't matter if it's a male or a female.
- K: Right, because the name itself has no gender. It's just a flower. Ann, of course, was a beautiful child and I thought the name was very appropriate for her.
- S: And now her sons have their Hawaiian names.
- K: Yes, and they're happy.
- S: Good. It's wonderful that they feel that way. And they come to Hawaii every so often to visit you.
- K: Yes, one of them is here now with me. They have property at Lanikai and he's building a guest cottage so that they have a place to stay. They love Hawaii.
- S: What are the two grandsons' full names?
- K: The older one is Philip Kai Binney. The second one is Peter Andrew Keliikahi Binney. He's on the mainland going to college. The older one has graduated and he's got an offer of a job here and an offer of a job in Arizona where he went to college. He doesn't know what he's going to do yet.
- S: I have a feeling his grandfather would like him to stay in Hawaii if possible.
- K: I'd like him to stay here, but I want to be sure, as I told him, that he can find a good future here. Hawaii's beginning to be... Well, it depends on what field you go into. The professions are full up. His field is business and business here is more or less limited unless you're connected with a mainland corporation. The Japanese are moving in here.
- S: At a rapid pace.
- K: So unless you have connections, it's very hard to get into business unless you start a business of your own.
- S: Of which there are some 28,000 now, I think.
- K: I don't know. He doesn't know what he's going to do, but I told him he'd better look twice before he decided to stay here, unless he can find a good job here. But he's not worried. He's a very capable boy and eventually he'll come into part of his father's fortune, so there's no problem there.

S: But apparently he loves Hawaii.

K: He does; very much.

S: Well, that's a large part of it. In spite of the fact that we're crowded more than we'd like to be, there's still no place like Hawaii.

K: We're aware of that. Peggy and I travelled all over the world and there's no place like Hawaii; it's clean, it's sanitary, and there are no poisonous insects, no wild animals.

S: (laughs) Not even any poison ivy. There's no place like it and I bet you thank God that he saw fit to put you down in this spot.

K: Absolutely. I often think about that--the chance one takes as to where you're going to be born and raised. Really. God was good to me, I think, to plant me here. At this time, too.

S: Well, as you said, you've returned to the community for what it's given you and I think you've returned to God, too, for what he's done. It's been a great eighty-some years with hopefully many more happy ones to come.

K: I hope so.

END OF TAPE 3/SIDE 1



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## THE WATUMULL FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The Watumull Foundation Oral History Project began in June of 1971. During the following seventeen months eighty-eight people were taped. These tapes were transcribed but had not been put in final form when the project was suspended at the end of 1972.

In 1979 the project was reactivated and the long process of proofing, final typing and binding began. On the fortieth anniversary of the Watumull Foundation in 1982 the completed histories were delivered to the three repositories.

As the value of these interviews was realized, it was decided to add to the collection. In November of 1985 Alice Sinesky was engaged to interview and edit thirty-three histories that have been recorded to mark the forty-fifth anniversary of the Foundation.

The subjects for the interviews are chosen from all walks of life and are people who are part of and have contributed to the history of Hawaii.

The final transcripts, on acid-free Permalife bond paper and individually Velo-bound, are deposited and are available to scholars and historians at the Hawaii State Archives, the Hamilton Library at the University of Hawaii and the Cooke Library at Punahou School. The tapes are sealed and are not available.

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